



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Committee/Task Force:	Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana		
Date of Meeting: (MM/DD/YYYY)	04/22/2020	Time:	10:00 – 11:30 am
Minutes Prepared By:	Barbara Hinojosa	Location:	Virtual Meeting

1. Meeting Objective(s)

Updates due to the Coronavirus

2. Standing Members

Name	Organization	In Attendance (X indicates present)
Rep. DeVon, Chair	Indiana General Assembly	X
Chris Blessinger	Department of Correction	X
Dr. Kris Box	Indiana State Department of Health	
Sen. Breaux	Indiana General Assembly	
Jay Chaudhary	Division of Mental Health and Addiction (FSSA)	X
Bernice Corley	Indiana Public Defender Council	X
Justin Forkner	Office of Judicial Administration	X
John Hammond IV	Governor's Office	X
Curtis Hill	Attorney General	
Sen. Houchin	Indiana General Assembly	X
Zac Jackson	State Budget Administration	X
Susan Lightfoot	Henry County Probation	X
Dr. Jennifer McCormick	Indiana Department of Education	
Chris Naylor	Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council	
Chief Justice Rush	Indiana Supreme Court	X
Terry Stigdon	Department of Child Services	X
Dr. Jennifer Sullivan	Family and Social Services Administration	
Rep. Summers	Indiana General Assembly	X

3. Staff/Guests

Name	Organization
Julie Whitman	Executive Director, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

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Eldon Whetstone	Indiana State Department of Health		
Ann Murtlow	United Way of Central Indiana		
Ted Maple	Lilly Endowment		
Robin LeClaire	Indiana Department of Education		
Mary Beth Bonaventura	Office of the Attorney General		
4. Commission Member Presentations			
Speaker	Main Points		
Terry Stigdon, DCS	DCS workers are essential and considered emergency workers. Working with and learning about virtual capabilities. Investigations of initial abuse and neglect allegations and anything where child safety is a concern is still face to face. Started prescreening through hotline on Feb. 28 th to determine if anyone is sick. Submitted foster care survey to determine how best help families if they are COVID-19 positive. Weekly contact with older youth. Support continues for older youth no longer with DCS but DCS has contact info for them to make sure they have access to food and other resources.		
Jay Chaudhary, DMHA	Offering providers maximum flexibility to use telehealth and remote services. Turning stories into data of people that otherwise wouldn't have access to services that now do because they are able to access those services from home. It's a little trickier working on youth and family services. A lot of schools have adopted telehealth and done telehealth home visits. Seems to be a seamless transition. Working with DOE to develop a survey that was given to school counselors and social workers to determine the level of contact with students and families and identify extra mental health needs. We've had over 300 responses. Mental health impacts of this are going to be long lasting and we're planning on a long process of beefing up the support that's available to people.		
Eldon Whetstone, ISDH	Our people are working from home. Having issues securing enough headsets. Focused on OB navigator – continues to operate as normal. WIC is closed but seeing clients over the phone and doing well. WIC overseeing food banks. Biggest challenge is lack of volunteers (many volunteers are older) and we're going through food faster than ever before. Childrens health care services program is done remotely. It's still a paper-based system and we haven't been able to migrate it all electronically yet. Working through it. People are emailing forms and documentation and staff is processing those as normal. Changing overall operations but continuing to provide services.		
Robin LeClaire, IDOE	Working closely with DCS to look out for foster students and put out guidance to schools on how teachers can still be mandatory reporters. Everyone is working remotely. Working with schools on how to get food and meals to all students – worked with USDA to get waivers – also helping create continuous learning plans so they know how to grade and communicate with students. Database of academic resources for teachers and parents, also four pages of social emotional supports. If students have no wifi schools are creating hotspots or doing paper packets. Partnered with IPBS so kids can watch lessons on TV if no internet. Working with the Emergency Operations Center to help provide PPE equipment that has been distributed to hospitals, healthcare facilities, and nursing homes by asking schools to donate. Worked with FSSA to collect data on where child care might be needed for health care workers.		
Zac Jackson, SBA	Due to the slowing of the economy we will be operating at a deficit this year and next. We started the year with about \$2.3 billion in the general fund and are asking agencies to try to maximize the amount of reversions or dollars that they can give back to the general fund this year. Not yet sent guidance out to state agencies for fiscal year 2021 but will probably go out between May 1 st and 8 th . Monday night a financial management circular was sent to state agencies calling on them to undergo belt tightening exercises.		

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John Hammond, Office of the Governor	<p>Working closely with legislative partners, particularly about the funding coming in. DOE has yet to receive their funding from the CARES Act and we are still waiting on guidance on the stabilization fund – a little over 2 billion – most of it potentially spoken for. FSSA working with food availability, shelter and child care – providing guidance for the ability of child care facilities to stay open for essential workers. Good tools on FSSA website. Possible mental health tools coming. Help providers with technical assistance whether it be payroll or other things. WIC has waivers to allow for innovation to help mothers and kids get food. Churches will be provided with guidelines.</p>		
Chief Justice Rush, Indiana Supreme Court	<p>Courts are open for essential emergency operations. We have a rule that requires every court to have a continuation of operations plan. We have 105 continuation of operation plans. All 92 counties and small claims courts are a little bit different. Supreme Court issued orders are on top of those. Order on schools is they are considered still in session. Clerks offices are closed. Orders were issued on paying child support. Calls were made to detention facilities to look at population. Same thing has been done for adults. Questions on if low risk juvenile offenders can be released and same for adults. Pretty big numbers with regard to low-level nonviolent offenders in jail. Working with DOC with regard to their protocol. There is no mechanism for judges to release somebody from DOC, it has to be pursuant to a petition and a hearing or executive branch. Family court judges have given guidance on visitation during pandemic. We have a COVID website that has orders on it. Today we are extending the Court's emergency order through May 18th. Working on how to do a soft reopening. Some counties doing remote hearings. Looking at funds and getting better technology out in trainings to our judges. A lot of work with getting courts back to business. Child welfare hearings are to continue. A lot of issues with regard to time frames as we start. There is going to be a push when things start opening up again with regard to getting numbers from MPH on addictions. Addictions are way up. With addictions, face to face is better than remote. We need better practices with regard to addiction.</p>		
Justin Forkner, OJA	<p>The soft reopening will include our staff. We've given out guidance this morning on how to conduct remote hearings. We're doing a lot of those in some of the juvenile and family proceedings. To some extent those will stay, I think. Have helped general counsel work with detention facilities on how to social distance within those facilities with folks that aren't able to be released.</p>		
Chris Blessinger, DOC	<p>Almost everyone is working remotely. Intakes are down. Youth are being screened when brought from detention center prior to transport which is going smoothly. Daily calls to wardons regarding adults and children. They are giving info and updates on what's going on in their facility and that is going really well. DOC is still in need of staff. There are smaller cohorts. Small classroom sizes and keeping the same group of kids together. Families are understanding of no visitation but DOC is making ways to communicate via phone and tablets. Every youth and staff has a mask. The release process is going well.</p>		
Bernice Corley, IPDC	<p>IPDC and state PD have been working together to provide training to help deal with issues that are not unique but accelerated. Helping problem solve any issues with visitation and helping provide training to public defenders on how to act as advocates for families in this unique time. State PD has been seeking release of juveniles in detention and has been successful in getting children out that could be appropriately released. IPDC and state PD have prepared shared forms for juveniles committed in DOC facilities that have reached level 3 of their growth phase to use that as a basis for opportunity for release. Would like to get information on non-DOC facilities on how they are keeping kids safe and what practices they have. Got a survey that the state of Michigan put together for their detention facilities on what their facilities are doing and what the population looks like.</p> <p>Discussion: Justin mentioned that the Supreme Court's general counsel, Brenda Rodeheffer, contacted all of the detention centers early on to see what they were doing and offer assistance. He said he would put Bernice in touch with Brenda.</p>		
Susan Lightfoot, Henry County Probation	<p>Probation is a little different in all 92 counties. Gone to reduced staffing in office, other staff working remote. Supervising clients and families via phone. Courts only doing essential hearings and those are over the phone or video conferencing. Meeting with clients via phone, skype, and zoom. Working on only essential removal from home on dealing with youth. A lot of emergency shelters are not accepting admissions. Trying to get telehealth care online support. Will have a gradual return to work.</p>		

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Mary Beth Bonaventura, OAG	Working with unclaimed property. Enforcing the moratorium on evictions.				
Rep. Summers	Not a lot of news. Has hand sanitizer if needed.				
Ann Murtlow, United Way	<p>Determine needs – threefold – 1. Human services need 2. Capabilities of non profit safety net 3. Resourcing that safety net so it can do its job. Donations from 6 funders – initial investment of \$17 million grown to \$23 million. Disbursed \$1 million to 74 human service agencies in 6 counties. Emergency needs determined by 200 human services agencies over the last 5 weeks. Significant needs – food supplies, food relief, child care for first responders, and service centers in neighborhoods and mental health care in underserved, isolated populations. Getting child care up and running quickly for first responders and having help of FSSA and clarifying standards. Working with agencies like YMCA, AYS, United Way and Early Learning Indiana to figure out how to take those agencies and then work with the Indiana public school systems to figure out how to use the facilities when they are closed and get in place to be able to grow and scale if demand requires it. Working with DCS and FSSA to get a safe facility for kids to go if DCS gets a call in middle of the night if a kid’s parent is in the hospital or dies and kids have no where to go.</p> <p>211--Provided additional funding so they can hire additional call takers to handle influx of calls they are taking. Sharing information with 211 so they have better info on services being provided. 211 gives us info on what they’re hearing as far as community needs. Calls slowing down because people are getting their stimulus checks – when money runs out influx of calls will start up again.</p> <p>Whole family approach to support. Emphasis on workforce care while investing in education. Child care will remain a critical focus if we want to get people back to work in a safe way.</p>				
Ted Maple	<p>Donated \$50 million to the Central Indiana COVID-19 Community Economic Relief Fund. Prioritizing speedy development of funds that deliver food to the hungry, offer child care, serve members of the community. Made most initial funding unrestricted in trusting the organizations to use the funding quickly and wisely. Another \$1 million going to Indianapolis school districts and charter schools to equip kids to learn – education innovation. Endowment to mainly helping kids and agencies on the frontline. Young kids – remote learning isn’t great for social development. Adolescents and teens need safe places to stay and mentors to steer them in a positive way. Young adults need access to education and training. Parents challenged with financial and other stresses. Many organizations not sure how long they can survive. Organizations servicing children are vulnerable—not the majority, but enough to be alarming.</p>				
7. Adjournment					
Action		Time			
The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.					
8. Next Meeting	June 17, 2020	Time:	10 a.m. - Noon	Location:	Virtual